

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK PRIORITY

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CINCLANT

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TAGS: PFOR EFIS XZ IC UK DA

SUBJ: ICELANDIC PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE;
NORDIC COUNCIL MEETING PRE-OCCUPIED WITH COD WAR

REF: A) REYKJAVIK 0304 (NOTAL) B) COPENHAGEN 0685

SUMMARY: THE "COD WAR" CONTINUES TO PRE-OCCUPY THE
NORDIC COUNCIL AND MEDIA. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY
ICELANDIC PRIME MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON SUGGESTED THAT
HIS COUNTRY'S CONFRONTATION WITH THE UK WOULD BE ANNUN-
CIATED IF THE LATTER RECOGNIZED A 100-MILE EXCLUSIVE
FISHERY ZONE FOR ICELAND. HE ALSO STATED THAT ICELAND'S
MEMBERSHIP IN NATO IS NOT UP FOR DISCUSSION IN CONNECTION
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WITH THE COD WAR. THE DANISH GOVERNMENT IS REPORTEDLY

UNCOMFORTABLE OVER ITS ASSOCIATION WITH CRITICISM OF A FELLOW-MEMBER OF THE EC, AND THE PROPRIETY OF THE PRESIDIUM'S STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR ICELAND WILL BE RAISED IN PARLIAMENT. FAROESE DELEGATES BROUGHT HOME ONE OF THE DANISH DILEMMAS OVER THE EXTENT OF FISHING ZONES: THE INTERESTES OF METROPOLITAN AND FAROESE FISHERS IN WIDE-RANGING OPERATIONS VERSUS THE NEED TO MAXIMIZE THE PROTECTION OF THE WATERS OFF GREENLAND. END SUMMARY.

1) THE PRESIDIUM'S STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF ICELAND (REF B) WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE COMPLETED COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF THE SUBJECT TO ALLOW THE COONCIL TO PROCEED WITH ITS USUALLY MORE MUNDANE BUSINESS. ACCORDING TO THE DANISH PRESS, HOWEVER, THE COD WAR CONTINUES TO PRE-OCCUPY CORRIDOR DISCUSSION AT THE COUNCIL MEETING. YESTERDAY (MARCH 2) ALSO PRIME MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON MET "UNOFFICIALLY" FOR TWO HOURS WITH DANISH PRIME MINISTER JORGENSEN AND FOREIGN MINISTER ANDERSEN BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO REPORT ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MEETING.

2) CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD YESTERDAY BY ICELAND'S PRIME MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON. AT THE CONFERENCE, HE REPEATED THE ASSERTION THAT THE BRITISH FRIGATES MUST LEAVE ICELANDIC WATERS "(ABSOLUTELY AND UNCONDITIONALLY)". THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ALSO QUESTIONED YESTERDAY ABOUT A SPEECH HE MADE AT A COUNCIL MEETING ON FEBRUARY 29. AT THAT TIME, HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IT MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO A PEACEFUL SOLUTION IF THE BRITISH, AT LEAST FOR A PERIOD OF TRANSITION, WOULD RCOGINZE A 100-MILE EXCLUSIVE FISHERY ZONE FOR ICELAND. WHEN ASKED YESTERDAY TO A ELABORATE ON THIS STATEMENT, HE SAID IT WAS PRIMARILY INTENDED AS AN "ARGUMENT" BUT ADDED, "IF THE BRITISH TAKE US ON OUR WORD, IT MIGHT PERHAPS BECOME AN OFFER".

3) PRIME MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON WAS ALSO ASKED WHETHER HE BELIEVED THAT THE US WHOULD "MEDIATE" IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BASE AT KEFLAVIK.

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HE REPLIED, "WE BELIEVE THAT ALL OUR FRIENDS WILL CONTRIBUTE HELP TO THE REMOVAL OF THE BRITISH FRIGATES." ACCORDING TO THE ACCOUNT, IN TOAY'S POLITIKEN (INDEPENDENT LEFT OF CENTER), HALLGRIMSSON SAID"LET IT BE UNDERSTOOD THAT ICELAND'S NATO MEMBERSHIP IS NOT UP FOR DISCUSSION IN CONNECTION WITH THE COD WAR."

4) EKSTRABLADET (SENSATIONALIST TABLOID) ALSO REPORTS

DANISH GOVERNMENT UNEASINESS OVER ITS IMPLICIT
ASSOCIATION WITH THE PRESIDUM'S CONDEMNATION OF THE
POSITION OF A FELLOW MEMBER OF THE EC IN THE UK
DISPUTE WITH ICELAND. CONSERVATIVE
MP IB STETTOR WILL RAISE THE PROPRIETY OF
THE PRESIDUM'S STATEMENT NEXT WEEK IN PARLIAMENT.

5) FINALLY, TWO FAROESE DELEGATES ON THE DANISH NORDIC
COUNCIL DELEGATION POINTED UP THE DANISH DILEMMA OVER
THE EXTENT OF FISHING ZONES. ON THE ONE HAND, IT IS
IN THE OBVIOUS INTEREST OF GREENLAND (AS WELL AS ICELAND)
TO PUSH THESE ZONES OUT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE FROM THE COAST.
ON THE OTHER HAND, FAROESE FISHERMEN WOULD SUFFER GREATLY AS
A RESULT OF 100- OR 200-MILE EXTENSIONS. AS THE FAROESE
DELEGATES NOTED, THEIR FISHERMEN ARE ACTIVE IN THE BROAD ZONE
OF THE NORTH SEA, NEAR NORWAY, ICELAND, GREENLAND
AND LABRADOR-NEWFOUNDLAND.
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